



THE LAGUNA BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LAGUNA BEACH LIFE | PAST PRESENT FUTURE

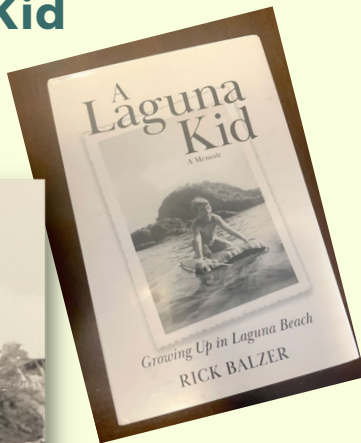
Birthday Party from family album: Rick Balzer celebrating his birthday in his backyard on Santa Cruz Street

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR THIS MONTH:

- NEW FRONT GARDEN AT THE BUNGALOW
- RIDDLE FIELD PLAY GROUND DEDICATION

Rick Balzer: A Laguna Kid

Presented by Rick Balzer



A Laguna Kid, Growing Up in Laguna Beach
Published in 2021

Books will be available the evening of the program.

Tuesday, April 18th
Susi Q Community Center
7:00-8:30 pm

Please join us as we listen to author, realtor, and Laguna Beach resident from 1949 until the 1990s, Rick Balzer, speak about how his family came to call Laguna Beach home. Rick's family's first home was in South Laguna, but not long after, that they moved to their permanent residence in Wood's Cove.

Rick's experiences growing up in Laguna include starting first grade at Park Avenue then moving before the end of the year to Aliso School as a student in the inaugural First Grade Class. Many of his childhood adventures occurred in the immediate vicinity of Aliso School. Adventures included hiking up the hill behind the school, building rafts on Aliso Creek, catching frogs in the creek, stepping in quicksand, and playing on Aliso Beach, which created an environment of exploration and fun. Rick will also recount memorable grade school teachers and events that happened during his time at Aliso School.

(continued on the following page)



Circa 1946 Rick as a toddler with his mother in Laguna Beach

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A Message from our President

KAREN LAGREW, PRESIDENT

Preparations are going on for the 100-year Birthday Celebration of The Murphy Smith Bungalow! You are invited to the festivities. Please save the date: **Saturday, May 20th from 10am - 1pm.** May is Laguna Beach's Heritage Month and celebration.

Built in the early 1920s, we are fortunate to exist in this space as a historical society and "mini museum", ode to all things Laguna. The little bungalow located in the heart of downtown has served our non-profit organization well, since we were established in 1992.

Its curtains were just cleaned, and the front garden is now landscaped and irrigated just in time for the rains and spring flowers. John Hoover oversees bungalow operations and keeps it in tip top shape so we can continue at this location for years to come, fingers crossed!

Spring cleaning at the bungalow also included the bookshelf. It was organized, and shelves were labeled helping visitors to find topics of interest. One label, Laguna Authors, includes many titles. Laguna provides great content and is a well loved topic to write about!

I have been reading one of the books on our shelves and have enjoyed learning about the life of its author, Rick Balzer. The book is titled *A Laguna Kid*.

Rick breaks up the book into short, readable, and entertaining topics which bring back memories for anyone over 50 years old. It isn't fiction that many of us played in the murky backwaters at Aliso or Main Beach, took the keys to the car in an effort for parental independence, or experienced a first kegger in a local backyard. These were rights of passage for many growing up in Laguna and surrounding areas.

Other Laguna authors on our shelves: Theodore Taylor, J.S. Thurston, Jane Petty Janz, Ronald Chilcote, Sarah Koops Vanderveen — too many to name. Stop by and take a look. Laguna Beach Books also keeps several local authors and titles on hand.

Karen Lagrew

(continued from the front page)

Later his playground moved to Wood's Cove and the canyon behind the family home in the Wood's Cove neighborhood.

Rick's adventures included building many tree forts and foxholes. He learned to swim and ride the waves at Woods Cove and Arch Beach. There was always an adventure to be found at the beach.

When he got to 7th grade, it was back to the campus at Park Avenue and migrating from his home room to his other classes. It was about at this time that he became more aware of the community. He will share some of those experiences in his talk.

He held several jobs before graduating high school. He left town after graduation but soon learned what a special town he had grown up in and came back to a satisfying career in real estate.



Treehouse: Rick in the foreground playing near his treehouse at the Santa Cruz house



The Women's Club: Dance lessons playing near his treehouse at the Junior High School, 1956



Lingo Real Estate Advertisement: "Got a real estate question? Call us. We'll get right on top of it."

Rick Balzer's career as a realtor started in 1968 as Nolan Real Estate's first salesperson.

Bungalow News



Jamie Piotti
Laguna resident and historical society member, Jamie, donated funding to create a beautiful and tidy new front garden.



Chris Reed
Chris is a retired local who knows gardens and native plants well and donated his time and expertise. He prepared, planted, and installed a self-timing drip irrigation system. He helped select shading blooming plants. Clivia and Heuchera "Old La Rochette" were the best choices. We will add color in interchangeable flower pots.

Thank you also to Andeaux Borunda and Nathan Meier for helping to clean and seal the concrete.



Board Member SPOTLIGHT

Eric Jessen

Born and raised in West Los Angeles with strong Laguna ties, Eric's relatives built their first house here in 1923 and their second one in 1940. He has been a full-time resident of Laguna Beach for 56 years.

Eric is the Retired Chief OC Harbors, Beaches & Regional Parks, and served as foreperson of the U.S. Federal Grand Jury, Central District of California, chaired numerous city committees & task forces, and is an Irvine family historian. He is an art detective for museums, collectors, and dealers. Eric landscaped and lived at Villa Rockledge in the 1970s.



Photo: Eric Jessen with Laguna's coastline behind him.

Why did you choose to serve on the board?
To share my knowledge about aspects of Laguna history with others & learn from their experiences.

Why do you think your position on the board is a good match for you? I enjoy regaling people with stories about colorful Laguna people and events, many of them from first-hand experiences.

What is your favorite part of working with the LB Historical Society?
It's tons of fun!

Patriot's Day Parade "Volunteer Heroes"
Board Members, Docents, Community Members, and Family participated this year.



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Thank you!

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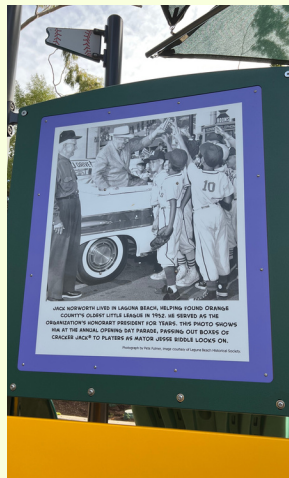
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Laguna Beach Historical Society
 278 Ocean Avenue
 Laguna Beach, CA 92651



Laguna Beach Historical Society: Around Town

Laurie Sanders, head of The Archive Committee, along with Nelda Stone, board member and local librarian, assisted Roger Kempler in locating a specific photograph of Jack Norworth to be used for panels that were to be installed in Riddle Field. This is part of the recently completed park improvement project with the city's Recreation and Public Works Departments. The panels were intended to recognize Norworth's contributions to Laguna Beach.

As part of an education series, The Assistance League invited President Karen Lagrew to speak about our organization.

Board members Eric Jessen and Carol Lloyd assisted the City Planning Manager Amber Dobson with a presentation given to city staff on the general history of Laguna and development.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, drop us a line at info@lagunabeachhistory.org
 With your support, we are able to maintain our beloved Murphy Smith Bungalow, present historical programs, send this newsletter, and host other events - thank you!

Visit us on YouTube: [Laguna Beach Historical Society](https://www.youtube.com/Laguna Beach Historical Society)

Visit our Website: lagunabeachhistory.org

Contact us at: info@lagunabeachhistory.org



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- PLATINUM — \$1,000***

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